

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY AND SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF, UNSC

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI -- UNSC MIDDLE EAST SESSIONS

SUMMARY: I SAW RIFAI DECEMBER 29 AND TOLD HIM OF MY RETURN AND PROVIDED HIM WITH A STATEMENT OF OUR PRESENT POSITION. HE ASKED FOR FURTHER REPORT ON ATHERTON'S MISSION AND INFORMATION ON ANY POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITIES IN THE US POSITION, NEITHER OF WHICH I WAS ABLE TO GIVE HIM. HE SAID KHADDAM WOULD BE COMING HERE FOLLOWING HIS CURRENT VISIT TO IRAN TO NEGOTIATE RESOLUTION TEXT. RIFAI FELT ANY RESOLUTION WOULD HAVE TO CONTAIN SOMETHING ON FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND PALESTINIAN RIGHTS IN ORDER TO SATISFY SYRIANS. END SUMMARY

1. I SAW RIFAI MORNING DECEMBER 29 TO DISCUSS WITH HIM DEVELOPMENTS SINCE ROY ATHERTON'S VISIT. I TOLD HIM OF MY RETURN FOR CONSULTATION NEXT WEEK AND PROVIDED HIM WITH THE SAME POINTS I HAD MADE TO KING HUSSEIN YESTERDAY.

2. RIFAI TOLD ME THAT KHADDAM WOULD BE COMING TO JORDAN FOLLOWING THE COMPLETION OF PRESIDENT ASAD'S CURRENT VISIT TO IRAN. AT THAT TIME THEY WOULD BEGIN THE PROCESS OF DRAFTING A RESOLUTION. AS I HAD PUT CONSIDERABLE STRESS ON THE NEED FOR NO CHANGE IN THE BASIC NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK (UNSC RES. 242 AND 338), RIFAI PUT CONSIDERABLE

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STRESS ON SYRIAN AND GENERAL ARAB DESIRE TO BE EXPLICIT

ABOUT FULL WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELIS FROM ARAB TERRITORY AND A STATEMENT THAT PALESTINIAN RIGHTS MUST BE ENDORSED IN RESOLUTION. HE PRESSED ME FOR WHAT FLEXIBILITY THE US HAD AND I TOLD HIM I HAD NOTHING TO TELL HIM ON THAT POINT AND REPEATED AGAIN WHAT ATHERTON HAD TOLD HIM ABOUT OUR POSITION. FINALLY HE ASKED IF I COULD TELL HIM ANYTHING FURTHER ABOUT WHAT ATHERTON HAD DISCUSSED IN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. AGAIN I TOLD HIM I HAD NO INFORMATION TO GIVE HIM ON THOSE POINTS.

3. WE THEN DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AFTER I HAD MADE THE POINT TO RIFAI THAT THIS SEEMED CLEARLY TO GO BEYOND THE PRESENT STATEMENT IN 242. RIFAI SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT. HE REPEATED THAT HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO US IN THE PAST WHEN JORDAN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON THE WEST BANK THAT JORDAN WAS PREPARED FOR RECIPROCAL EXCHANGES OF TERRITORY WITH ISRAEL -- THAT THE 1967 LINE COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A SECURE BOUNDARY. BUT AT THE SAME TIME THERE HAD TO BE SOME RECOGNITION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AFTER WHICH NEGOTIATION COULD TAKE PLACE ON THE QUESTION OF BOUNDARIES. ON PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, RIFAI SAID HE THOUGHT MAYBE A GENERAL STATEMENT ONLY WOULD SUFFICE. HE RECALLED THAT IN THE PAST THERE HAD BEEN ACCEPTANCE IN UN RESOLUTION OF IDEAS OF "REPATRIATION AND COMPENSATION." BUT IN THOSE DAYS THE PALESTINIANS HAD BEEN TREATED AS REFUGEES. NOW THE SITUATION WAS CONSIDERABLY CHANGED, IMPLYING THAT THE PLO, PALESTINIAN NATIONALITY AND STATEHOOD WOULD ALL HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. RIFAI ASKED IF WE COULD ACCEPT A RESOLUTION WITH REFERENCE IN THE PREAMBLE TO 242 AND 338. I REPLIED THAT I WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO NEGOTIATE WITH HIM AND WAS NOT INFORMED ABOUT WHAT WE COULD AND COULD NOT ACCEPT IN ANY DETAIL, BUT THE LOGIC OF OUR VIEW AS I HAD RELAYED IT TO HIM WOULD REQUIRE REAFFIRMATION OF THE PRESENT FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN ANY RESOLUTION AND THAT FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN ANY RESOLUTION AND THAT FRAMEWORK WAS SET BY 242 AND 338 AND BEYOND THAT I HAD NOTHING FURTHER I COULD SAY. PERHAPS I WOULD BE ABLE TO TALK WITH HIM FURTHER

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ON MY RETURN. RIFAI REPEATED HIS HOPE THAT A RESOLUTION COULD BE WORKED OUT FOR WHICH THE US COULD VOTE OR ABSTAIN. HE SAID MUCH WILL DEPEND UPON THE SYRIAN FRAME OF MIND. IF THEY BELIEVE THE US WILL VETO ANY RESOLUTION, THEY MAY BE DETERMINED ON DEVELOPING ONE WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE US BUT ONE ON WHICH THEY CAN GET 13 OR 14 VOTES IN SECURITY COUNCIL. IF THEY BELIEVE THERE IS HOPE IN WORKING WITH THE UNITED STATES, THEY MAY BE

PREPARED TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE. HE SAID HE EXPECTED KHADDAM TO COME TO AMMAN WITH FALLBACKS. HE WOULD TRY TO WORK SOMETHING OUT WITH KHADDAM BUT AT THIS POINT THE US POSITION DID NOT GIVE HIM A VERY GOOD BASIS ON WHICH TO WORK WITH THE SYRIANS. HE AGAIN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT A COLLISION COULD BE AVOIDED. WHILE HE SAID THERE WAS NOT MUCH POSSIBILITY IN HIS VIEW FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN 1976 AND WAS FRANKLY NOT VERY CONVINCED THAT MUCH COULD HAPPEN IN 77 OR AFTERWARD, HE ACCEPTED THE LOGIC THAT FORCED STAGNATION NOW WOULD NOT HELP THE ARAB POSITION.

4. RIFAI SAID HE HELPED EGYPT AND SYRIAN WOULD NOT TRY TO COMPETE IN UN ON RESOLUTION TEXT. IF SADAT WERE REASONABLY RELAXED, THAT WOULD HELP ENORMOUSLY IN KEEPING SYRIANS IN BOUNDS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THERE IS ANY THING I CAN GIVE RIFAI IN THE WAY OF A READ OUT OF THE SAUDI, EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI REACTIONS TO ATHERTON'S VISIT PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE JANUARY 3. DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER WHETHER, IN VIEW OF RIFAI'S PLANNED DISCUSSION THE END OF THIS WEEK WITH KHADDAM, THERE IS ANYTHING FURTHER WE WISH TO CONVEY NOW TO THE JORDANIANS. I HAVE MADE PLANS TO SEE RIFAI ON SATURDAY MORNING JANUARY 3 IN JUST PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE IN ORDER TO GET WHATEVER READ OUT HE IS PREPARED TO GIVE ME ON THE EXPECTED VISIT HERE OF KHADDAM TO NEGOTIATE RESOLUTION TEXT.
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